



Youth and Poker: Five “A’s for alarm”

In substance abuse prevention, there are many well-known “risk factors” that increase the likelihood for a youth to develop a problem behavior. There are several similar factors that may also contribute to problem gambling among youth. The following list outlines many of the risks involved with youth poker playing; many of the points apply to all forms of gambling.

For more information on youth risk and protective factors, go to:

http://www.azprevention.org/Prevention_In_Practice/What_Works/What_Works_Risk.htm

Availability

- Poker kits/toys in stores
- Video games
- Poker nights
- Internet
- Schools casino nights after proms and graduations

Age

- Easy to start early: available to even the youngest youths (video handheld games, poker kits, toys)
- Pathological gamblers and youth in general report early gambling in the home and with family members (Dickson et. al, 2002)

Accessibility

- Kids can play right from any computer
- Poker games at schools/in homes
- Poker kits sold to anyone and displayed in toy sections
- Lack of monitoring on internet
- Trend toward mobile gambling: handheld games, software on mobile phones

Advertising

- More positive exposure/messages than ever
- TV shows
- Internet banner ads

Acceptability

- Condoned by adults for kids
- Professional poker kits displayed in toy sections
- Sold as kids games for handheld toy games, video games
- Poker viewed as a “sport”
- Viewed a positive, risk free alternative to alcohol/drugs for youth
- Gambling has become a family activity

Our thanks to the Oregon Department of Health for permission to adapt their materials on youth gambling.

**For free confidential information and referral
regarding a gambling problem, call**

**1.800.NEXT.STEP (1.800.639.8783) or
www.problemgambling.az.gov**